

They may have a right to make that statement, but that does not make it right to make that kind of a statement. It should be retracted.

I commend President Bush and I hope other members of the NRA, in one way or another, would let their leadership know that kind of rhetoric is unacceptable about an American administration. Like any other administration, it, I am sure, has agents who make mistakes from time to time. There is a place to rectify them. It is called a court. But to make that allegation from an organization the size of the NRA I think is unacceptable, it is irresponsible, and it still should be retracted.

I thank my friend from Arkansas for his continuing effort to try to bring some kind of calmer normalcy into the general climate in this country.

I yield the floor.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President I just want to observe that the managers of the pending legislation I understand are working on some agreements hopefully that will make it possible to wrap up this legislation before the day is out. Therefore, at this time, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I would like to ask the Chair what the pending business is.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending business of the Senate is the Hatch amendment numbered 755.

Mr. COATS. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ROTH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GREGG). Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY

Mr. ROTH. Mr. President, just a couple of hours ago, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty—the single most important component of the international effort to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons—was enshrined for all time by an overwhelming decision made by more than 170 countries party to the treaty. The decision to make the NPT permanent was accomplished without any conditions or qualifications.

This is a truly historic day in our ongoing efforts to make ours a safer and more peaceful world. The security of all countries, weapons States and non-weapons States alike, has been strengthened.

The NPT has established the norm prohibiting the further acquisition of nuclear weapons. Indefinite extension of the NPT will help improve the climate of trust conducive to more restrictive controls over weapons-grade nuclear materials and related technologies and activities. It also provides momentum for addressing the dangers posed by other weapons of mass destruction.

Making the NPT permanent, of course, will not end the global nuclear proliferation threat. Treaty membership is never a guarantee of compliance. Yet, when backed by strong national policies, the NPT advances the security interests of all countries. Indeed, it has helped to keep the number of declared nuclear weapons States and so-called “threshold” States at five and three respectively.

Clearly, the world remains a dangerous place. Iran, North Korea, and the theft of fissile materials present immediate nuclear proliferation perils. Much progress on controls over other weapons of mass destruction remains to be made. Moreover, as the tragic bombing in Oklahoma has shown, determined terrorists can accomplish their contemptible intentions with even the crudest of weapons.

But today is a time for celebration. We have achieved a critical victory in making the post-cold-war period safer and more secure. This is a victory for all the world's people. I believe this body deserves a measure of credit for the unanimous adoption of a resolution in March calling for permanent, unconditional extension of the NPT. It is also a testament to the hard work of Tom Graham who took the lead in the negotiations. The chairman of the conference held in New York, the Honorable Jayantha Dhanapala of Sri Lanka, also deserves our thanks for his particularly skilled leadership. Happily, Mr. Dhanapala will be returning to Washington within a few days to resume his post as Ambassador of his country to the United States.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY AND U.S. SECURITY

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, 26 years ago, the Senate provided its advice and consent to ratification of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT]. In considering the treaty, Chairman Fulbright prevailed on the Members of the Senate to ratify the NPT, because without it, the world would face a wide array of potential nuclear horrors—such as developing

nations acquiring nuclear weapons to elevate their status or national power; regional powers resorting to the use of nuclear weapons to settle their differences; or ethnic or religious differences being settled with nuclear weapons. He foresaw a world where major powers like the United States might be held hostage by small, poor countries who possess a few nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them, or, become drawn into a nuclear confrontation brought about by these small nations through a miscalculation or an accident.

At the time the NPT was negotiated there were relatively few countries who had tested or possessed nuclear weapons. Those countries were the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, France, and China. They became known as the nuclear weapons states. All other states who did not possess or had not tested nuclear weapons became known as non-nuclear weapons states.

Back in 1969, when the Senate voted to provide its advice and consent to ratification of the NPT, I was one of the 15 members who voted against ratification of the treaty. I voted against it because I had grave reservations about the treaty's goals and whether they could be achieved. I was concerned that if the United States ratified the NPT, it would be unable to fulfill its NATO responsibilities and commitments. I feared that the NPT would also foreclose the ability of NATO members to participate fully in the operations of the Alliance. Lastly, I was concerned that the nuclear weapons states, and in particular, the United States, would bear the huge costs of transferring nuclear technology for peaceful uses to the non-nuclear weapons states.

Mr. President, the overall goal and purpose of the NPT is to stop the spread of nuclear weapons, and to prohibit the transfer, or acquisition and manufacture of nuclear weapons by non-nuclear weapons states. However, there are no enforcement mechanisms to prevent a non-nuclear weapons state from becoming a nuclear weapons state in the NPT. There are no sanctions for violations of the treaty. While the NPT requires the parties to pursue negotiations to end the nuclear arms race and bring about nuclear disarmament, the NPT cannot force an end to the race for nuclear weapons, nor can it force the destruction of all nuclear weapons.

For that matter, the NPT cannot ensure that parties to the Treaty, whether nuclear weapons states or non-nuclear weapons states, do not withdraw from the Treaty if they decide they wish to acquire or develop a nuclear arsenal for their own national security reasons. In fact, the NPT has a withdrawal clause.

The NPT only covers countries that have ratified the Treaty. For example, take the so-called threshold states which have developed nuclear weapons,